

THE IMMINENT DANGERS OF RE-COLONIZATION OF POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN STATES

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Abstract

The current sordid existential realities of Postcolonial Africa States have continued to escalate over time as a result of governance challenges buffeting these countries which have sunken deeper in the mesh of poverty, underdevelopment and corruption. The inability of African governments to change the course of development in their countries are traceable to the disinclination of African ruling elites to dislodge the dependency structures emplaced by colonialism because of their selfish interests. This situation accounts for Africa's uncritical compliance with the policy dictates of globalization which have turned the continent into mere producers of primary commodities and worsened its socioeconomic and political crises despite its abundant natural resources. Already, seven African states have relapsed into military dictatorship and a lot more countries in Africa could tow that line in not too distant future, if African governments remain incompetent, corrupt and unable to assuage the economic problems of their citizenries. The expansionist drives of some new age emperors which comprise China, Russia, India, and the Western world with the United States as its leader, could constitute real danger should these powers decide to replicate the Berlin conference of 1885 when European powers portioned Africa among themselves with no remarkable resistance from Africa. Sadly, Africa's current state of weakness could inspire its recolonization.

Key Words: Colonization, Colonialism, Globalization, Governance, Corruption

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Introduction

The world is beginning to express concerns about the continuing colonial repression of the free will of 17 forgotten territories that are still under the domineering control of colonial authorities. The territories are Anguilla, Bermuda, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Montserrat, Pitcairn Islands, Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, UK sovereign Base Areas¹, French Polynesia, Guam, and United States Virgin Islands(wionews.com/world) Recently in Abuja, Nigeria, the *Society for International Relations Awareness* (SIRA) organized a Conference for the Eradication of Colonialism with the intention of drawing attention to the plight of the aforementioned colonies and to stimulate global agitation for their independence. This paper was presented at the Conference².

The post-second world war struggle to decolonize territories under the shackles of foreign and alien authorities birthed more than 80 nations which were swiftly recognized and granted sovereign status worthy of membership of the United Nations (UN). The consequential increase in the membership of the UN, gave rise to the growing awareness and assertiveness of the newly independent states in the global state system and of the formation of some pressure groups with multilateral agenda within the UN pushing for human rights, self-government, and an end to colonization in the world among other objectives. Why then are these 17 territories still held in captivity by some new age colonial powers?

Colonization according to *The Chambers Dictionary* is an act of planting, or establishing a colony. A colony is “ a name vaguely applied to a state’s dependency overseas or abroad (distinguished from a dominion); a military settlement planted in subject territory; a band of emigrants or their new home, connected with but without political ties to their city of origin, ...”³. *The New Lexicon Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* defines colony as “a land or place settled by people from another country, to whose government it is in some degree subject; the people who do this, their descendants, and those who join them; people of the same foreign nationality, or of a special occupation, living in an unorganized

¹ The Africa Report (2020) <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20230727-niger-coup-france->

² Amin, Samir, *Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism* (Monthly Review Press, 1976); <https://www.wionews.com/world/these-17-territories-around-the-world-are-still-under-colonial-rule=404052>

³ *The Chambers Dictionary*, 1999, Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd, Edinburgh

community, (The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopaedic Dictionary of English Language)⁴. These definitions of colony are pregnant with meanings which include: the superiority of the foreign country that established the colony; the subordinate status of the colony to the colonizing authority; the inability of the colony to independently organize its affairs without any input from the colonizing authority; a military sphere of influence or operational base of the colonizing authority; and a dependency of the colonizing authority, among other meanings.

In the real world situation, the colonizing authority is the dominant partner in the relationship with its colony. The interests of the colonizing authority are the motivating drivers of its governance machinery in the colony. The moment the colonized territories become aware of their strategic importance to the geostrategic and economic calculations of the colonizing authority, agitations by the former for independence would commence. The partitioning of Africa into 'spheres of influence' by the great nations at the Berlin Conference of 1885 marked the inauguration of colonial domination of the partitioned territories of Africa. Although preceding the formal establishment of colonial control of African territories by the great nations of Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, and Britain(all European powers), there had been unequal exchanges in trade and commerce including several years of slave raiding and trading between these powerful nations and the different segments of Africa. This position was adopted from Samir Amin's theorizing on the unequal development between the colonies and the colonizers.⁵

Colonization in Africa's context was the formalization of the exploitative interactions between Africa and the rest of the world. Colonization of Africa was the formal establishment of political control over the affairs of the diverse territories of Africa which were partitioned by the great nations that came together in Berlin to appease one another with African territories which were shared among themselves in order to avert direct confrontation with one another over the territories of Africa which they seized for themselves. The decision to colonize Africa was taken without any inputs from Africans because the colonizers had a common understanding and belief that they had the requisite fire power to translate their resolutions at the Berlin conference into reality without craving any support from African populations for their decisions. Why couldn't Africa resist the onslaught on its territories by European powers?

⁴ idb

⁵ Amin, Samir, Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism (Monthly Review Press, 1976); <https://www.wionews.com/world/these-17-territories-around-the-world-are-still-under-colonial-rule=404052>

At that point in history, Africa had regressed through several years of exploitative encounters with adventurous European expeditioners and slave raiders of the period preceding the Berlin Conference's conspiratorial agenda of European powers, and had no strength to counter the colonial force of domination that eventually became its sordid reality for almost a century since 1885. In the whole of Africa, only Ethiopia and Liberia were never formally colonized by European powers. Ethiopia and Liberia were never formally colonized. Ethiopia successfully resisted Italian colonization in the late 19th century and maintained its independence throughout the Scramble for Africa. Liberia was founded in 1822 by the American Colonization Society as a colony for freed slaves from the United States. Therefore, reference to postcolonial African States in this paper can conveniently exclude Ethiopia and Liberia even though they are also facing the same challenges with other African countries.

Africa's colonial tutelage under European powers was with great pains, and the region experienced huge losses and had its rich mineral resources and raw materials siphoned to Europe to fuel the growth of industrialization and upgrade the living standard of European workers and citizens at the expense of the colonized territories and their people. Radical scholars like Walter Rodney⁶, Andre Gunder Frank⁷, Samir Amin⁸, Claude Ake⁹, etc. had at different times proven in their theoretical explications the dubious and exploitative nature of the exchanges between colonial authority and the colonized territories which they argued, decapitalized and underdeveloped Africa, throughout the period of colonial rule in Africa. Put differently, African wealth was transferred to Europe through the machinations of colonial administrations that were in the saddle in all the colonized African territories¹⁰.

The negative impacts of colonial rule in Africa was not only economic; colonial malfeasance had its imprints on political and social superstructures of African sub-formations. The pre-independence nationalist agitations in most African colonies were furious in their vociferous condemnation of colonial administrations for their inhuman policies, ethnic manipulation, suppression of culture and traditions, imposition of taxes, victimization of women, dictatorial tendencies, and repression of associational groups and pressure groups, among others. Democratic politicking was not well-supported by the colonial administration, because by its

⁶ Rodney Walter, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Bogle- L'Ouverture Publications, 1972).

⁷ Andre Gunder Frank, *The Development of Underdevelopment* (Monthly Review Press, 1966).

⁸ idb

⁹ Ake, Claude, *Social Science as Imperialism: The Theory of Political Development* (Ibadan University Press, 1979);

¹⁰ idb

very nature and character, colonial rule is antithetical to democracy. Thus, African nationalists had to contend with all the restrictive policies of the colonial authority which were meant to undermine their roles as political leaders of their countries in the foreseeable future. The deliberate contraction of the political space in which fewer Africans were co-opted into the governance architecture of the colonial administration, ensured that the representation of African interests was inconsequential. The implication of this development was that in most colonial enclaves in Africa, pre-independence politics was undemocratic as it was unrepresentative. The struggle of the nationalists for the expansion of democratic space under colonial rule was vehemently resisted by the colonialists in a bid to prolong their hold on power, and delay the transition to self-government which was the ultimate quest of the nationalists.¹¹

As the pressures kept mounting on the colonialists for the liberalization of political power and the ultimate relinquishment of power to African nationalists across the colonized African countries, by late 1950s, steps were taken to grant more Africans access to political decision-making bodies of colonial administrations. And as from the 1960s, political independence was granted to a good number of African countries, and the course of history of the newly independent African States took a new turn. But, the nature of political independence achieved by the different African States varied from one to another depending on the policies, context and politics that the different colonial administrations contended with. However, the 1960s by and large was the decade of political independence for most erstwhile colonized African States.

The essence of this paper is the interrogation of governance challenges buffeting African States that came out of the stranglehold of colonial rule several years ago. Why are African States in such despicable mess that seem to suggest that they are incapable of self-governance? Most of the erstwhile colonized African States had gone through periods of undemocratic governance; some had experienced civil wars, and a good number of them are burdened by huge debt overhang, and their citizens are languishing under debilitating and harrowing pangs of hunger. Will the fate of the 17 forgotten colonial enclaves on attainment of political independence be similar to that of the post-colonial African States after some years?

The global political atmospherics seem unstable when the pressures of both Russia and China on the extant balance of power are put in proper perspective. Russia wants to annex

¹¹ Ledenva, M., Okhremenko, I., Inshakova, E., Plaksunova, T., (2020). Industrialization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and Opportunities. In: Popkova, E.G., Sergi, B. S. Haabazoka, L., Ragulina, J.V. (eds), Supporting Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa- Volume1 (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.); https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41979-0_6

Ukraine and more of the defunct Soviet Union's territories. China has been putting Taiwan, and Hong Kong under immense security pressure, as a prelude to China's plan to overrun these two nations and fully reintegrate them with China. Given the current latent unstable international politics in which the powerful nations are desirous of expanding their territories by annexing proximate and relatively weaker nations, it is unlikely that postcolonial African States, which are currently highly vulnerable would be able to ward-off any re-colonization onslaught by the erstwhile European colonial powers, or by new age powers should there be a consensus among world powers to undertake such course of action. Given that the neocolonial means and mechanisms through which former colonial powers established indirect control over economic resources, politics, and policies of postcolonial African states are beginning to wane, and globalization which has heightened the frustration of poor nations of the world including Africa is being resisted across Africa, the conditions that could warrant the forceful takeover of Africa by new age colonial powers have ripened. Let no one doubt the possibility of a rehash of the colonization of Africa by "Western powers which built their foundation stones on genocide, slavery and colonialism"¹².

Governance Challenge in Postcolonial Africa

The way to assess the quality of governance in colonial Africa is to consider the nature and character of governance in postcolonial Africa. A good number of African countries experienced military usurpation of their political systems by their militaries shortly after they attained independence because of the inability of their political elites to chart a cohesive and collaborative administration in their separate countries. No sooner had the colonial administrators handed over power than the militaries struck in most postcolonial African countries. The phenomenon of military coup that was widespread across Africa was indeed a blight on the governance credentials of the colonizers, as the military adventurists in Africa deepened the divisions among the political elites and worsened the economic indices of underdevelopment in Africa. This pattern of political contest between the political elites and the military in Africa continued for a long period of time because the dominant world powers which could have insisted on the observance of some good governance values were locked in ideological warfare between the Western powers under the leadership of the United States and

¹² Andrews, Kehinde, *The New Age of Empire: How Racism and Colonialism Still Rule the World* (Penguin Random House, UK, 2022).

the Eastern powers led by the Soviet Union. In actual fact, once an unpopular government in Africa identifies with either of the blocs in the cold war between the West and the East, that government was given strategic support by the power bloc it identified with. African governments-both civilian and military- played the West against the East to eke out a living and stabilize their hold on power for some decades until the early 1990s when the Soviet Union, the ideological leader of the Eastern power bloc disintegrated and was Balkanized.

The disintegration of Soviet Union in 1989 and the consequential victory of the Western power bloc birthed the era of democratization and the resultant proscription of undemocratic system of government by western powers. African governments that had successfully navigated through the contest between the West and the East during the cold war years to their own advantage were subsequently faced with the dilemma of satisfying the governance requirements of the western powers to be eligible for any consideration of economic aid and support, as a result of the demise of the Soviet Union. Since the 1990s when the wave of democratization swept through the shores of Africa, military coup became an abomination which the western world detested badly, even though the same western world had used it to unseat unfriendly governments in Africa that were perceived to be identifying with leftist ideas of the erstwhile Soviet Union. The import of the resolve by the western world to promote and support democratic governance in Africa meant the freezing of development aid and assistance to undemocratic governments in Africa. This was what gave rise to the emergence of several civil society groups across Africa which enjoyed generous funding by the western world. The agitations by these multitudinous civil society groups coupled with the hostile international climate under which undemocratic governments in Africa were made to operate, instigated the democratic ferment in most African countries that were still under military rule.

The opportunism of Africa's hasty democratic rebirth is palpable in the near absence of democratic institutions and culture at the time the military disengaged from power and yielded the political space for democratic governance in Africa. The post-military civilian administrations in most African countries were undemocratic in orientation and governance. They emerged as contingency contraptions by the military to assuage the sanctions by the western world for delaying democratic transition. In Liberia, Cote Divoire, Mali, Gambia, Angola, Uganda, Congo, C.A.R, etc., the transitions to democratic rule were riotous and rancorous with violent skirmishes recorded across these countries. In Nigeria where there was an elaborate transition programme which was anticipated to birth the third republic in 1993, the military which had ensured the successful implementation of the programme in all the series

of elections preceding the presidential election, suddenly had a relapse into its anti-democratic orientation by annulling the outcome of the presidential election on the eve of the conclusion of the transition process during which a democratically elected president would be declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission. The resultant protests that greeted the annulment of the presidential election led to the stepping aside of the country's military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, who, on his exit imposed on the country an Interim National Government(ING) headed by a civilian, Chief Ernest Shonekan, a renowned corporate executive. That development further spurred wider protests across the country, until the Minister of Defence, General Sanni Abacha swept both the ING and the vestiges of democratic transition aside in a bloodless coup which marked, unfortunately, the resumption of full-blown military rule in the country¹³.

The democratic reversal in Nigeria in 1993 invited an avalanche of reactions from the western world. Economic sanctions were unleashed by European Union and several allies of the western world on Nigeria. The sanctions affected the country and the citizens but the military leaders still held on tightly to the levers of power without any definite programme of democratic transition in sight. That the military government of General Abacha survived the myriad of sanctions till he died mysteriously in 1998 was partly as a result of the support his administration received from China, India, Cuba, Russia and some other countries which saw prospects in exploiting the benefits of the temporary exit of the business interests of the western world from Nigeria. The successor military administration of General Abdulsalami Abubakar wasted no time in coupling together the moribund political structures of the pro-democratic forces in the country which his predecessor silenced and suppressed. Subsequently, a transition to democracy programme that culminated in the conduct of elections to all the elective offices across the country was rolled out. And on 29th May, 1999, the fourth republic was emplaced with the swearing-in of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the President of the country. The success of the one second-photo-finished transition to democracy programme of the military administration of General Abdulsalami Abubakar cannot discount the major support received from the western world.

African variant of democracy has been on in many countries of the continent since the 1990s and it is not impressive as the citizens of these countries in Africa are contending with the

¹³ Diamonds Larry, Anthony Kirk-Greene, and Oyeleye Oyediran, eds, *Transition Without End: Nigerian Politics and Civil Society Under Babangida* (Lynne Rienner, 1997).

socioeconomic challenges occasioned by the demonstrable incompetence and ineptitude of their elected leaders. The promise of democracy has not really found any manifest expression in most of these countries, as their long-suffering citizens are wondering whether they were not better under the colonial administrations of the past. But unknown to these hapless African citizens, their postcolonial leaders –both military and civilian–were and are still tied to the apron strings of their countries’ colonizers despite their countries’ cosmetic attainment of political independence. Where there were any seeming dissidence or rebellions on the part of postcolonial African leaders, these were done in order to enable them to fully embrace an alternative power to replace their erstwhile colonizers. This shows that Africa has not really been free in the actual sense of the word, and that lack of freedom accounts for the palpable malfeasance in all sectors of African countries’ economies¹⁴.

Postcolonial Africa's political economy perpetuates poverty and weak economic structures. Successive governments fail to reform inherited systems, while public services maintain dependency on foreign nations. Bureaucratic elites, shaped by this dependency, hinder policy implementation. Reforming economic structures, public services, and mind-set is crucial to breaking this cycle¹⁵. Africa's reliance on foreign investment and imports stems from a flawed development paradigm. Deceptive Western economic theories have misled African leaders, harming local economies. In contrast, advanced economies prioritize government-driven policies to protect citizens. Africa must adopt a self-sustaining approach to achieve economic growth. Such deceptive economic theories include “*Governments have no business in business*” or that the way to economic development is to “*allow the private sector lead and drive the economy, why governments should only create the enabling environment for the private sector*” These theories and other policy proposals of the western world have destroyed most African economies whereas the governments of advanced economies are still very active in driving and implementing their economic policies to ensure that their citizens are protected against the exploitative and profit-making obsessions of their private sectors. Governance is too serious a business to be left in the hands of the private sector, because the motif force of the private sector is to make profit at the expense of the people and not to grow the economy. A good government like the ones in the western world moderates the economy and ensures the existence of a competitive atmosphere for private sector companies to compete amongst

¹⁴ Ake, Claude, *Democratization of Disempowerment in Africa* (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 1994).

¹⁵ Magbadelo, J O, “Africa’s Development Trajectory: Lessons from China”, *Insight Turkey* vol. 22. No.3, 2020, pp.257-265.

themselves for the patronage of the citizenry. But, the opposite exists in Africa where the governments create monopolies to run the social sectors without competition, and this has often meant expensive and poor service deliveries across the different sectors¹⁶.

In addition, the challenges facing Africa's development include neglect of Research and Development (R&D), innovation, and inventions in public service establishments; underutilization of scientists and technologists; dependency on foreign technological products; inadequate funding for education, particularly higher education; deficient libraries and laboratories; and brain drain resulting from emigration of African intellectuals. The cumulative effects of these include limited industrial development; perpetuation of dependent economic relations with other regions; and lack of value addition to global technological advancements. Africa's industrial development requires homegrown solutions, not foreign-run industries. Decolonizing education and producing local scientists and technologists will reverse dependency. Self-reliance, not foreign goodwill, is key to Africa's economic transformation¹⁷.

Postcolonial African leaders have largely demonstrated lack of knowledge about the global dynamics of international capitalism which is being driven by countries of the west with the United States in the center of the new empire in which the UN, IMF, World Bank, and World Trade Organization play their part in administering colonial logic and neo-colonialism¹⁸. This arrangement neither rewards incompetence nor naivety, and therefore, leaders of third world countries, especially African leaders ought to be circumspect in their relationship with these global bodies which are not ideologically neutral. It is not surprising therefore that in all the indicators of development, postcolonial African leaders have underperformed. Some African States are at the verge of having their assets taken over by China on account of their huge indebtedness to China (spyuganda.com). Below is a table indicating the estimated current indebtedness of some postcolonial African States to China:

country	China
Angola	\$25 billion
Ethiopia	\$13.7 billion
kenya	\$ 10.3 billion

¹⁶ idb

¹⁷ idb

¹⁸ idb

The Republic of Congo*	\$ 7.5 billion
Sudan*	\$ 6.4 billion
Zambia	\$ 3.4 billion
Cameroun*	\$ 5.5 billion
Nigeria	\$ 5.6 billion
Ghana	\$ 3.7 billion
The Democratic Republic of Congo – Kinshasa	\$6.7 billion
Country	China
South Africa	\$6.3 billion
Tanzania	\$ 4.5 billion
Egypt	\$ 7.4 billion

Sources: China Africa Research Initiative, Johns Hopkins University, 4 March, 2023¹⁹

Spy Uganda* 14 November 2021

China currently owns a huge proportion of African debt, being the biggest Africa's bilateral lender. These loans were ostensibly contracted by these African States to finance infrastructure projects such as roads, railways, and ports as well as to support their general budget needs. But in most cases, the real worth of the projects on ground in these countries, in terms of the cumulative amount expended on the projects, are way below the value of loans received from China. China's indiscriminate lending to Africa has generated controversies about debt sustainability, transparency, and the risks of debt distress in some of these countries. It is pathetic that most of these countries are equally indebted to other countries including US, UK, Canada, Japan, Germany, as well as multilateral lending institutions. As of 2022, African countries owe US\$655.6 billion to external creditors, and it is estimated that they would pay US\$89.4 billion in external debt service in 2024. In addition, not less than 20 low income countries in Africa (59% of assessed countries) are currently in debt distress²⁰.

¹⁹ Trade.Gov, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/angola-oil-and-gas>

²⁰ Data.one.Org, <https://www.data.one.org/topics/african-debt->

The implication of these wretched statistics of Africa's indebtedness is the ever-diminishing capacity of African governments to effectively govern their countries. The huge yearly expenditure on debt servicing has put governments in most African States in a cul-de-sac, a big dilemma which was occasioned by African leaders' intellectual laziness and ideological naivety. Their collective illusionary expectation that their countries' embrace of democratic governance would endear them to Western governments' gratuitous and lavish offers of development assistance, made them adopt transient quick fixes for their fundamental economic challenges which ought to be given some rigorous and scientific consideration. Ironically, most African countries are sitting on a huge deposit of one vital mineral or the other which the Western world and indeed the developed world need for their continued industrial development.

Africa is not prone to any of the geological disasters being experienced by other parts of the world. It is also blessed with arable and cultivatable land which could feed the whole world, if well utilized. But, lazy African leaders could not appropriate these natural resources in their countries for long term developmental planning. Their resort to handy loans from China when Western loans were not readily accessible in good numbers made African leaders plunge their countries' economies into the cesspool of indebtedness which has now become an albatross hanging on their countries, causing socioeconomic and political turmoil. Youth unemployment, poverty, food shortages, crimes and criminalities, insecurity, and other allied social crises that are ravaging most African States, and challenging Africa's governance model which naively was anchored on the mistaken belief that democracy would solve all governance challenges and make Africa develop like the Western world.

An examination of the natural endowments of the thirteen African countries shown in the table below which as depicted in the earlier table are currently neck-deep in debts, will provide some illumination. It will confirm the position that these countries ought not to be in the economic mess that their leaders had over time plunged them. The huge deposits of minerals which most developed European and Asian countries lack are in abundant supply in these African countries. But these countries have continued to mismanage their resource endowments to an extent that in contemporary scholarly circles, they are referred to as "Resource Cursed" countries. It was British economist, Richard Auty that coined the term "resource-curse" in a 1995 book investigating why resource-rich countries under-performed other developing

countries²¹. What should have catalyzed economic and industrial development in these resource-rich African countries have, painfully, been mismanaged by successive governments and which underdeveloped their own countries in a manner akin to the wanton exploitation of the colonial era.

Country	Natural Resources
Angola	Petroleum, diamonds, iron ore, phosphate, Uranium, bauxite, gold, granite, copper, feldspar.
Ethiopia	Gold, platinum, tantalum, gemstones, niobium, soda ash, petroleum & natural gas.
Kenya	Gold, iron, steel, titanium, gemstones, water, wildlife.
The Republic of Congo	Gold, coal, iron ore, monazite, diamonds, bauxite, offshore petroleum.
Sudan	Gold, uranium, chromite, gypsum, mica, marble, iron ore, crops, livestock, fisheries.
Zambia	Copper, emeralds, gold,

²¹ Auty, R. M (1995), "Economic Development and the Resource- Curse Thesis" in Morrissey, O, and Stewart, F. (eds), *Economic and Political Reforms in Developing Countries* (London: Palgrave Macmillan). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-1-349-13460-1_4

	silver, cobalt, zinc, coal, petroleum, freshwater, wildlife.
Cameroon	Gold, cassiterite, iron ore, uranium, rutile, nickel, manganese, petroleum.
Nigeria	Petroleum, natural gas, tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium, lead, zinc, arable land.
Ghana	Gold, cocoa, sawn wood, diamonds, manganese, limestone, bauxite, iron ore, clays, granite.
The Democratic Republic of Congo – Kinshasa	Cobalt, copper, industrial diamonds, hydropower potential, arable land, world's second largest rainforest.
South Africa	Gold, platinum group metals, chrome ore, manganese ore, and second world's largest reserves of zirconium,

	vanadium, and titanium.
Tanzania	Gold, silver, tanzanite, iron ore, copper, nickel, cobalt, graphite, and uranium.
Egypt	Petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, manganese, limestone, gypsum, talc, asbestos, lead, zinc.

Source: Google search on abundant natural resources of these 13 countries.

Aside from the fact that the practice of democracy in Africa falls far short of the standard expectation for its legitimation, African politicians are bereft of the cultural and idiosyncratic values that sustain democracy and its practices elsewhere. Democracy is a governance model; it is not an ideological model or a development paradigm, and therefore, the practice of democracy may not necessarily result in economic development, if the right economic policies are not implemented. African democratic practice has been too conflict and crisis-ridden because the stake of political contest is very high, as electoral victory confers access to incredibly huge perquisites and resources which are life-transforming, for which contestants would do anything to achieve. No segment of Africa's lifeworld would be as profitable an endeavor as the political arena because all other endeavors are shortchanged by politicians whose outrageously fixed remunerations for their largely part-time or less demanding engagements as lawmakers or elected executives are extremely and offensively huge. This situation often creates an impression that the politicians are only concerned about their own well-being at the expense of the masses and the electorate that voted them into office. African democracy has been greatly devalued by the poor-performance of its institutions and elected officials coupled with the mounting economic challenges buffeting African countries.

It is not too clear how long the long-suffering African masses would endure the failings of their democracies in the face of humiliating and disempowering forces of poverty, hunger and insecurity which are making their lives brutish and short as the recent protests in Kenya, Ghana

and Nigeria exemplified. But, one thing appears certain, that the danger is palpable that Africa can relapse into either the pit of military dictatorship or the nadir of recolonization, if the governments remain negligent of the well-being of their citizens and countries. There are no good choices from the alternative futures of Africa from the stand point of its recent history. Although, military coup is an aberration and a rogue action which suspends civil rule or a democratic order, it is not a strange occurrence in most African countries, which had experienced it shortly after their independence from colonial rule. Already, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Sudan and Gabon are under military dictatorship which came into existence under the pretext of restoring sanity to the governance process and addressing some perceived ills including security challenges in those countries.

While it is true that African governments ought to have shown commitment in exploring and exploiting their countries' resources for Africa's development, and governing to indigenize and promote autonomous development for the greater good of their citizenry, there are unfriendly forces of globalization which are impinging on Africa's economies and frustrating the prospects of their development.

Africa's weak status in the era of Globalization

Globalization according to the European Commission, is the increasing global interconnectedness of economies, societies, cultures and politics, driven by technological advancements, trade, investment and the movement of people²².

This definition emphasizes the multifaceted nature of globalization, encompassing economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions. According to Claude Ake, globalization is the emergence of a global system of production, exchange, and consumption which is characterized by the global integration of markets for goods, services, and capital; the global diffusion of technologies; the global spread of cultural practices and values; and the global organization of social relations²³. He points out that globalization is about growing structural differentiation and functional integration in the world economy; it is about growing interdependence across the globe; it is about the nation-state coming under the pressure from the surge of transnational phenomena; and about the

²² European Commission (2006), "Globalization: A European Strategy (Com2006) 567-Final; European Commission (2010) "Trade, Growth and World Affairs: Trade Policy as a Core Component of the EU's External Action" (Com2010) 612-Final

²³ Ake, Claude, "Globalization and Africa: A Review of the Issues" in C. Ake (ed.), *Is Africa Democratizing?* (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 1995), pp. 13-34.

emergence of a global mass culture driven by mass advertising and technical advances in communication²⁴.

For the purpose of this conversation, it suffices to view globalization simply as the process of economic neoliberalism that promotes interdependence among countries of the world. This process is anchored on the principles of trade liberalization, which entails removal of trade restrictions, tariffs, and other barriers to the movement of goods and services, in order to allow unhindered trading and economic relations among countries of the world. Since the advent of globalization, its sponsors and some developed centers of world commerce and trade which include China, India, Japan, and South Korea have continued to make huge benefits from the process because they have the wherewithal to massively produce goods at very low and competitive costs which they have continued to flush to countries of Africa and other third world countries. African economies in periods preceding globalization were generating revenues from tariffs and import duties which also protected their products from local industries against imported ones from other countries. But, the unfair and unjust insistence by the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the removal of trade barriers among countries in the contemporary era of globalization, has badly affected African economies. Cheaper and well-packaged goods from other countries of Asia and Europe are preferred by Africans, and that preference spelt the doom for Local industries in Africa which could not produce goods at comparatively cheaper prices that could compete with those from other countries. Consequently, African factories and industries began to fold up and the borders of African countries were flung open to all manner of goods from other countries.

The influx of cheap textile from China led to the closure of 160 textile factories between 1999 and 2015 in Nigeria, and that resulted in the loss of over 250,000 jobs. Only 25 textile industries are operating in Nigeria today, down from over 200 in the 1990s. The Nigerian government estimated that the country lost over \$2.2billion in revenue due to the influx of cheap textiles from china between 2000 and 2014²⁵. In Angola, cheap Chinese imports have led to the decline of local industries, such as textiles, footwear, and food processing, as they cannot compete with the low prices of Chinese goods. Loss of jobs, dependence on imports, undermining of local entrepreneurship, decline in sales and revenue of local vendors in

²⁴ Ake, Claude, Globalization and the prospects for Democracy in Africa” in P. Gibbon (ed.), Globalization and New Identities: A view from the Middle (Uppsala: Nordiska, Afrikainstitutet, 1996), pp. 151- 172.

²⁵ Murtala Muhammed, Mansur Ibrahim Muktar, and Gold Kafilah Lola, “The impact of Chinese textile imperialism on Nigeria’s textile industry and trade 1960- 2015” Review of African Political Economy, <https://doi.org/10.1080/030-56244-2017-1313729->

traditional markets such as the Roque Santeiro in Luanda, loss of revenue and a host of other consequences are the palpable realities of globalization across Africa (data.one.org.).

The implications of globalization for Africa are the myriad of economic problems that have turned Africans against their governments. The uncritical and compliant disposition of African governments toward globalization and its policy dictates have undermined their countries' economies while unwittingly promoting the prosperity and economic well-being of the benefactors and beneficiaries of globalization. Africa should not expect to benefit from globalization until its governments have done away with the legacies of colonialism and the post-independence structures which were inherited from the colonizers. Decolonization of Africa must be total in all ramifications: cultural, educational, political, and social. The sustenance of colonial structures in post-colonial Africa is unhealthy and has been instrumental in maintaining the exploitative links between the erstwhile colonizers and their former colonies. The revolt against the strong links between France and its former colonies was partly responsible for the military takeovers in the earlier indicated seven (7) French West African countries.

The over-reliance of many African States on primary commodities exposes them to global price fluctuations. Since the attainment of political independence, African countries that were producers of primary commodities ought to have taken steps to add some value to their produce in order to earn more foreign exchange. The few agro-allied industries of the pre-independence period have gone into extinction as a result of policy failure on the part of successive post-colonial administrations. The low level of industrialization in Africa is a contributory factor to the lack of value addition and competitiveness of its economies. Related to that is the prevalence of corruption, poor governance and weak institutions which do not only discourage investment and hinder economic growth, but are the reason for inadequate energy, transportation and communication infrastructure which ought to facilitate trade.

Africa's limited access to technology hinders its ability to compete globally. Africa needs to be conscious of the fact that interdependence among countries of the world which globalization enhances does not mean absence of competition. Outside of Africa, the rest of the world can source the following raw materials and primary commodities from South America, Asia, North America, Europe, Oceania, and Middle East:

Country	Raw materials/primary commodities
Brazil	Iron ore, soya beans, coffee
Argentina	Soya beans, corn, wheat
Chile	Copper, lithium, wine
Peru	Copper, gold, silver
Indonesia	Palm oil, rubber, tin
Malaysia	Palm oil, rubber, timber
Philippines	Copper, gold, nickel
China	Coal, iron ore, rare earth minerals
United States	Coal, copper, gold, soya beans
Canada	Timber, copper, gold, iron ore,
Russia	Timber, oil, natural gas, nickel
Ukraine	Iron ore, coal, wheat
Norway	Oil, natural gas, timber
Australia	Coal, iron ore, gold, wool
New Zealand	Timber, wool, dairy products
Saudi Arabia	Oil, natural gas
Iran	Oil, natural gas, copper

Source: Google search on huge revenue-earning natural resources of the above-indicated countries.

Africa needs to ensure that its various raw materials and primary commodities are enhanced for increased competitiveness at the global market. Nigeria's mismanagement of its oil resources is legendary. The crude oil production fell from 2.171 million barrels per day in 2015 to 1.463million barrels per day in June, 2023 due to unchecked massive oil theft activities in the country's Niger Delta region. The country has three national refineries on which huge sums are routinely expended for turn-around –maintenance, but the refineries with their retinue of

staff and engineers have for a long time been idle. The country has continued to import fuel for domestic consumption. The recent presidential directive to Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to sell crude oil to Dangote Refinery, Africa's biggest private oil refinery, is a welcome development. Dangote refinery is a \$19billion facility has a capacity to produce 650, 000 barrels per day and has started producing diesel and aviation fuel since January 2024. Angola's petroleum industry faces challenges due to years of underinvestment, leading to a decline in production²⁶. This downward trend undermines government finances and hinders the country's ability to attract new investors. Angola's oil production was 2m barrels per day in 2010, but dropped to approximately 1.16m barrels per day in 2024²⁷(trade.gov/). Similar mismanagement of natural resources abound across Africa where what could have transformed these resource-rich countries are continuously frittered away as a result of the combination of incompetence and corruption.

Another major factor militating against Africa's effective participation in the global capitalist system is the continent's limited industrialization. The manufacturing sector in Africa is weak, and this explains why Africa's share in global manufacturing is still very low. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the World Bank have expressed concerns that the region needed to play increasing role in the world economy, which it is not doing due to its weak industrial base²⁸.

Although globalization policies have transformed some countries' economies but in Africa, it presents serious challenges for Africa's structural transformation because of contradictory policies which create a difficult environment for the continent to succeed. Related to the foregoing is the fact that African industries have continued to face competition from established industries in developed countries, making it difficult to gain market share. Trade agreements and tariffs have continued to limit African industries' access to global markets. Industrial goods from Africa are expensive because of their high cost of production caused by inadequate transportation, energy, and communication infrastructure.

Africa's economic participation in the global capitalist order is unfortunately largely consigned to the exportation of primary commodities, and this has made it difficult for its economy to

²⁶ African.Business <https://african.business/2021/03/energy-resources/tough-challenges-for-angolan-oil>

²⁷ ibd

²⁸ Ledenva, M., Okhremenko, I., Inshakova, E., Plaksunova, T., (2020). Industrialization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and Opportunities. In: Popkova, E.G., Sergi, B. S. Haabazoka, L., Ragulina, J.V. (eds), Supporting Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa- Volume1 (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.); https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41979-0_6

integrate with the global economy, thereby limiting Africa's participation in the global value chain. As a result of this skewed involvement of African industries in global value chain, they often find it difficult to access finance and credit required for investment and growth. Africa's education and skills development are not well-aligned with industrialization needs. Educational institutions in Africa are still running on the colonial curricula that keep churning out sterile and unproductive scientists and engineers that are bereft of the technical knowledge and skills for driving modern industries. Without carrying out requisite reforms in African educational systems through the decolonization of their curricula, it is doubtful if, their graduates would be able to fit into the operational requirements of modern industries. As a corollary to the above, African youths that have acquired special skills considered relevant to the requirements of modern industries are unwilling to offer their skills and expertise to prod their countries' industrialization. Thus, skilled and talented African youths are deserting their countries in droves as they take the risky plunge to Europe and other developed countries of the world through the Sahara desert- a development responsible for the recurring challenge of irregular migration and the resultant high incidence of death of African migrants who are escaping to the proverbial greener pastures. This phenomenon known as brain drain has continued to dispossess Africa of its quality manpower while enriching the western world and the rest of the world with the talents, expertise and energies of its migrating population.

African governments' policies are implicated in the sustenance of the unequal exchange between Africa and the rest of the world. The benefits of globalization have not been evenly distributed across the countries of the world given the differing conditions and circumstances of economic engagements of the different countries and groups with the global economy. For Africa to re-engage with the global capitalist system, it needs to fundamentally change its economic policies to reflect a determined zeal to prioritize industrialization and technological development, a marked departure from the current dependence on importation of industrial products from the rest of the world which has turned most countries of Africa to mere dumpsites of antiquated technologies and second-hand machineries. There is every indication that African leaders seem unschooled on the theories and mechanics of globalization, as their countries' economic policies in response to the policy dictates of globalization have been inflicting socioeconomic hardships on their long-suffering citizens, and these African governments have not demonstrated strong political will to change the sordid and repugnant trade relations between their countries and the rest of the world.

Globalization is empowering countries that are industrialized while those with weak industrial base are marginalized because of their uncompetitive products which are produced at higher cost. Consequently, by default the international division of labour has positioned African countries as producers of primary commodities because that is where their economies have comparative advantage in the global market. The characterisation of African countries as mere producers of primary commodities would only change when steps are taken to address the challenges of industrialization, policy inconsistency, governance incompetence, and corruption which have underdeveloped their potentials as actors in the global capitalist system for so long since their attainment of statehood. But, until this happens, African countries' socioeconomic conditions would remain possible trigger of a rehash of military adventurism or recolonization by either their erstwhile colonizers or by the new age emperors in the world state system.

Re-colonization of Africa: Which way forward?

Obviously, Africa is a basket case when its situation is compared with other regions of the world. There is no justification for the poverty, underdevelopment and huge indebtedness that have become the collective identity of the continent which possesses abundant natural resources that most countries of other regions lack. It seems an implausible argument to posit that Africa is the way it is today as a result of its colonial history of exploitation and subjugation as if it was the only region with such historical experience. The inability of postcolonial governments in Africa to transform their countries' economies and engage the global capitalist system as active players with beneficial impact on the well-being of their citizens is a cause for concern and a subject for scholarly inquisition.

The governance challenge of postcolonial African States viewed from the standpoint of dependency theorists could be an inherited hang-up from the colonial era. Colonization destroys the civilization of the colonized, and emplaces the values and systems of the colonizers- values that are alien to the natives of the colony, using a measure of force to sustain the imposed governance systems. The argument of the radical scholars of the dependency school is that because Africa was exposed to the worst form of colonization which decapitalized the region and dismantled its natural civilization, Africa would find it difficult to develop along the path spelt out by its former colonizers who are working in concert with the Bretton Woods institutions²⁹ to perpetuate the sordid existential realities of Africa. The

²⁹ ibd

dependency theorists believe that structures of Africa's dependency on their former colonizers had already been emplaced in Africa, and that until those structures are dismantled and the economies of African countries are delinked from the neo-colonial trappings, African governments would remain a conduit for funnelling the wealth of Africa to the western world. Africa's independence was viewed as mere cosmetic political transfer of power to pliant native successors by the colonizers, with the ulterior motive of continuing colonial exploitation of Africa's resources through other means³⁰.

Postcolonial African governments have shown utter lack of capacity to pursue autonomous development agenda for the transformation of their countries. The path of dependent development that they are pursuing has proven unhelpful as African people are getting poorer and are dying young of even curable diseases on account of grinding poverty and disempowerment. The subtle and insidious forms of imperialism to which Africa has been exposed by the captivating but deceptive rhetoric of globalization, cooperation, and development, the sing-song of 'Empire 2.0' has turned Africa to an inconsequential player in the global capitalist economy despite its abundant natural resources³¹. This is so because postcolonial African governments have continued to demonstrate incompetence and lack of political will to change the imbalance in their relations with the dominant players in this new age of empire, or Empire 2.0. The continued sustenance of the current order that is injurious to the broader interests of postcolonial African States will imperil the sovereignty of African states and expose them to the dangers of re-colonization since their current state of vulnerability is not too different from what it was when European powers of the early 19th century scrambled and partitioned the continent among themselves and exploited the human and material resources for their own industrial development.

The dominant players in the new age of 'Empire 2.0' that has impoverished and incapacitated African States are the United States, China, European Union, and Japan. Other nations like India, Brazil, and Russia are also playing important roles. These countries dominate the current global order of 'Empire 2.0' - as a result of their economic strength, technological advancement, military power, strategic alliances, cultural and ideological influence, global governance and institutional leadership, and ability to shape international norms and agendas. The former European colonizers – Britain, France, Portugal, Belgium, Germany-Italy, Spain, Austria-

³⁰ ibd

³¹ ibd

Hungary, Sweden, Denmark-Norway, and Netherlands- are in weaker positions and cannot separately take steps to forcefully re-colonize their erstwhile colonies directly, regardless of Africa's vulnerability. But, through the instrumentality of the unified European Union, the erstwhile European colonizers could venture into Africa should the world powers and the western world which has the United States as its main driver and arrowhead decide to replicate the 1885 Berlin conference scenario in the future. Africa as a subject of European countries 'desire was not in any position to defend itself against the expansionist and extortionist designs of the European powers that partitioned the continent in the early 19th century. Britain that colonized India is no longer in the position both materially and militarily to contemplate the recolonization of India because India is one of the world powers of this new age of empire. But, Africa's current situation is sharply a contrast to India's highly transformed position in the world state system.

In contemporary times, Russia's growing influence in Africa reflects its global ambitions, desire for resources, and strategic competition with western powers. Russia engages with African regional organizations such as the African Union, to promote cooperation and shape policy. The country offers military equipment, training and support to various African countries, and it also employs private military companies (PMCs) like the Wagner Group to provide security services, train local forces, and protect Russia's interests. In Mali in 2020 and 2021, Russia's Wagner Group was allegedly involved in the coups that ousted President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and later the transitional government. The coup that removed President Alpha Conde in Guinea in 2021 had the presence of Russia's Wagner Group. Russia's influence was suspected in the coup that ousted President Roch Marc Christian Kabore of Burkina Faso in 2022 because the new military junta expressed readiness to strengthen ties with Russia. In Niger Republic, the new military administration that emerged in July 2023 after President Mohammed Bazoum was sacked in a coup expressed loyalty and allegiance to Russia while it expelled French troops. In reaction, the French government suspended diplomatic relations with Niger and closed its embassy in Niamey, in addition to its decision not to issue new visas to students from Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. These developments mark a significant decline in French influence in the Sahel region (The Africa Report, 2020). The flying of Russian flags by some groups of young protesters in Kaduna and Kano States during the nationwide "End

bad governance” protests in Nigeria has further raised concern about the daring political interference of Russia in the internal affairs of African States³².

China’s foray into Africa has become a sore point in the colonial ambitions of western powers because China has succeeded in establishing itself as the most formidable contender for the resources of Africa, having entrapped the ruling governments in Africa with generous loans which the west could not offer them. China could afford to lavishly throw resources at Africa because of its favourable placement in the extant global economic architecture which is under-developing several other countries and regions of the world. But, China’s rapid economic development was achieved in large part by exploiting their own poor and looting Africa in a disturbingly European fashion. In places like Congo, Angola, and Zambia, China is providing money to build infrastructure while stripping the natural resources of these countries. Across Africa, countries are making the same deals with China, selling off their most valuable resources on the cheap to get at least some infrastructure built. China has continued to contract these lopsided deals with Africa to accelerate the exploitation of Africa’s resources³³.

As it has been made clear from the foregoing, no extra-African regional power would pursue Africa’s developmental objectives at its own expense. Africa needs to shake itself up from the dust of poverty, underdevelopment and dependency to which it has been consigned by the extant global order because no world power genuinely has African interest as its agenda. The new age emperors of the global capitalist system as highlighted above are comfortable with the structures of exploitation which ‘Empire 2.0’ has emplaced for them to keep extorting huge resources from Africa with the connivance of African governments and their ruling elites. The relationship between African ruling elites and the new age emperors of the current global economic order is mutually cordial because their interests converge in consonance with the theorizing of the dependency school about the dilemma of postcolonial African States. Thus, the recolonization of postcolonial African states has been sealed through a deceptive and benign arrangement of continued exploitation of Africa by the conspiratorial alignment of African governments with the new age emperors of the extant global capitalist order. This situation is well-rendered by Kehinde Andrews as follows:

The new age of empire is based on moving away from formal colonialism, breaking down the power of the state and delivering racial exploitation through economic, not physical coercion.

³² Naijaonpoint-<https://naijaonpoint.com.ng/endbadgovernance-why-we-waved-russian-flags-kano-protesters>

³³ ibd

This meant granting so-called independence and relying even more on local elites to manage their countries. There are classes of the wealthy from the former colonies who owe their lifestyles and positions to Western imperialism (Kehinde Andrews, p.204).

Where Africa's wealth in form of its manifold natural resources which are buried underground are easily accessed by the powerful nations of the subsisting global order without the need to forcefully and physically re-colonize Africa, the only remedy that would put an end to the reckless plundering of Africa's resources is an implosive bottom-up revolt against the status quo, a form of revolution against anti-people governments in Africa, to establish a pro-people leadership for Africa's transformation and development. Until this happens, it appears that Africa would continue to feed the greed of the western world and the new age emperors with its huge resources, while the vast majority of Africans will keep languishing in poverty and underdevelopment. After some time in the not too distant future, if Africa refuses to rid itself of its very filthy local exploiters that are collaborating with external forces to perpetuate underdevelopment of the continent, the powerful nations of this new age of empire might decide to do what was done to the continent at the 1885 Berlin conference of European powers which shared Africa into pieces among themselves, thereby changing the subtle approach of the new age of empire to the forceful re-colonization of the continent.

Conclusion

Africa is in dire straits of continuing maladministration, poverty and underdevelopment. The current condition of Africa since its attainment of independence after several years of colonial humiliation is unpardonable when its abundant natural resources are considered. There is obviously no success story in Africa till date, because all of the countries in the region are experiencing one form of underdevelopment or another which requires that their ruling elites re-examine their governance philosophies and reposition their countries 'development trajectory within the context of the subsisting global capitalist system.

The mismanagement of Africa's huge resources by successive African governments has turned what was supposed to be utilized to transform Africa into a curse because the situation of the continent has not been favourably impacted by those resources, as the resource-rich African countries continue to wallow in debt, poverty and underdevelopment which has further worsened their vulnerability in a global economic system in which weaker players are pawns in the chessboard of the powerful ones.

Postcolonial African States are not the only countries with the histories of colonial exploitation; India, America, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, etc., were once colonized at different times but have over time become big players in the global capitalist economic order even without huge deposits of natural resources which Africa has in abundance. The argument of the dependency theorists on Africa's peculiar stagnation and underdevelopment is plausible to the extent to which African governments have remained pliant and compliant tools in the hands of their erstwhile colonizers and the new age emperors, to continue the ruinous exploitation of their countries' resources to the detriment of African long-suffering masses and underdevelopment of their countries. The danger of Africa's recolonization is a palpable reality in the face of its entrenched weakness and susceptibility to external re-possession by a consortium of powerful nations in contemporary global order. However, direct and forceful re-colonization of Africa will be unnecessary for so long as the new age exploiters and erstwhile colonizers of Africa can access the resources of Africa through collaboration with African governments and their ruling elites. But, the revolutionary pressures in Africa are rising and the prospects of a bottom-up revolt against African governments have never been brighter than they appear in contemporary times. The time has come for African governments to rid themselves of their anti-people orientation and embrace policies that would transform their countries and strengthen their placement in the global system. Until that happens, Africa will remain in a precarious state that makes its despicably weak position attractive to the colonial schemes of the new age emperors.